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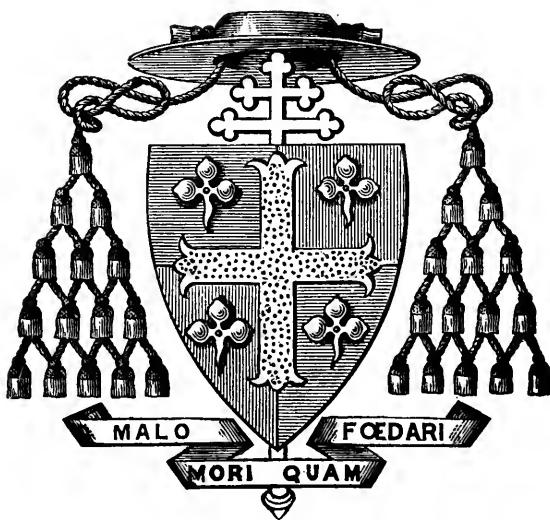




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A  
PASTORAL LETTER  
TO THE  
Clergy and Laity  
OF THE  
ARCHDIOCESE OF WESTMINSTER,  
FOR  
QUINQUAGESIMA SUNDAY.

BY  
HENRY EDWARD,  
CARDINAL ARCHBISHOP OF WESTMINSTER.



LONDON.

1882.



HENRY EDWARD, CARDINAL PRIEST OF THE HOLY  
ROMAN CHURCH, of the Title of SS. ANDREW  
AND GREGORY ON THE CÆLIAN HILL, by the Grace  
of God and of the Apostolic See ARCHBISHOP OF  
WESTMINSTER, to the Clergy and the Faithful  
of the Diocese.

HEALTH AND BENEDICTION IN THE LORD.

REVEREND AND DEAR FATHERS, AND DEAR CHILDREN IN JESUS  
CHRIST,—

WHEN Isaias prophesied in the streets of Jerusalem, the private life of many was evil ; but the city was sacred to the Divine law. So, when the Vicar of our Divine Master reigned in Rome, the public life of men at least was obedient to the Christian faith. So, again, in days long gone by, when the world was Christian, though men were often unchristian, the social authority of Christianity constrained them to outward respect, and sustained them in a life above themselves. In these times the reverse is true. Men are Christian ; but society is putting off its Christianity. It no longer sustains us ; it is dragging down even Christian men in its own decline. There may be—and no doubt there is—a growth of Christian faith and of religious life in individuals ; but the public life of nations, and the social life of the world, is fast becoming faithless, and even hostile to faith. The world now reigns over us. We date, indeed, from the Incarnation ; but the world has thrown off the laws and the traditions, the customs, and the instincts, the feasts and the solemnities, the fasts and the discipline of penance. These things are believed, and loved, and cherished, and obeyed, by the immutable Church alone, and by its faithful children scattered in the world. They still, by their own free, spontaneous choice, hold to the divine traditions of Christendom. But faith and piety are now once more, as in the beginning, the treasure and the inheritance, not of nations

—hardly even of households—but of individuals one by one. Christianity is relegated from the public life of nations to the private life of men. We need, therefore, a double spirit of fidelity and courage, of perseverance and fervour. We need, more than ever, all the spiritual counsels, and helps, and supports, which the Church, by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, has ordained for our sanctification.

At the head of all these is the austere and sacred season of Lent—the forty days of fasting, self-accusation, self-chastisement, of return from sin to God, of renewal, and resolution, and aspiration to a higher life, which once in every year recalls us to ourselves. We are once more upon the threshold of this sacred time. Let us use it well. It may be our last Lent, our last time of preparation and purification before we stand in the light of the Great White Throne. Let us, therefore, not ask how much liberty may we indulge without positive sin, but how much liberty we may offer to Him who gave Himself for us. “All things to me are lawful, but all things edify not;” and surely in Lent it is well to forego many lawful things which belong to times of joy, not to times of penance.

The Indult of the Holy See has so tempered the rule of fasting that only the aged, or feeble, or laborious, are unable to observe it. If fasting be too severe for any, they may be dispensed by those who have authority. But, if dispensed, they are bound so to use their liberty as to keep in mind the reason and the measure of their dispensation. A dispensation does not exempt us from the penitential season of Lent. They who use a dispensation beyond its motives and its measures, lose all merit of abstinence, temperance, and self-chastisement. If you cannot fast, at least abstain. If you cannot abstain, use your dispensation as sparingly as can be, and only as your need requires. If in fasting and abstinence you cannot keep Lent, keep it by prayer, and Sacraments, and alms, and spiritual mortifications. Chastise the faults of temper, resentment, animosity, vanity, self-love, and pride, which, in some degree and in divers ways, beset and bias if they do not reign in all our hearts. In these forty days let the world, its works and ways, be shut out as far as can be from your homes and hearts. Go out of the world into the desert with our Divine Redeemer.



Fast with Him, at least from doing your own will ; from the care and indulgence of self which naturally besets us. Examine the habits of your life, your prayers, your confessions, your communions, your amusements, your friendships, the books you read, the money you spend upon yourselves, the alms you give to the poor, the offerings you have laid upon the Altar, and the efforts you have made for the salvation of souls. Make a review of the year that is past ; cast up the reckoning of these things ; resolve for the year to come on some onward effort, and begin without delay. To-day is set apart for a test of your charity and love of souls. We may call it the commemoration of our poor children, and the day of intercession for the orphans and the destitute.

Sixteen years have now elapsed since a sense of justice began to move the Guardians of the Poor to transfer our children from the Protestant education of the District Schools to schools of their own religion. It has been a long and weary work, always renewing itself ; for every year new children enter the District Schools, so that the number is always replenishing. Moreover, every year new Guardians are elected. A Board that was just and kindly last year, this year may be hostile. One that led the way in past years is now in opposition. Nevertheless, the flagrant injustice of detaining Catholic children for many years—sometimes from infancy to fifteen years of age—in Protestant schools has been now fully acknowledged. Such children have been completely deprived of Catholic faith. The duty, therefore, of placing them in Catholic schools, where they can be taught and educated according to the faith of their parents, has been fully recognised. We are glad to declare that this duty has been honourably fulfilled by the whole body of Guardians in the Metropolitan District with the exception of three or four Boards. To the justice and Christian charity of the great majority of the Guardians we desire to bear this public witness. They have honestly and humanely acted upon the Statute law of England in the spirit of the great precept of our Divine Master, “ Whatsoever ye would that man should do to you, do you also to them.” We forbear at present to name the three or four

Boards who have until now failed both in charity and in justice. For wealth, for education, and for worldly state, they ought to have been the first to set an example to the Metropolitan District. They have chosen to be the last, and to stand alone in persistent refusal to liberate Catholic children from their Protestant schools. They have chosen this unjust course with the plain letter of the law, and with the example of the Metropolitan District before them. They must, therefore, accept the judgment which just and Christian men have formed of their conduct. In the school where these Catholic children are detained there is no Catholic schoolmaster or mistress. For a long time there was no Catholic officer or matron capable of watching over them. At one time a porter, or some such inferior officer, had the duty of reading prayers with them. About a hundred Catholic children are still kept in a school with many hundreds of Protestant children. They live daily under the constant influence of their companions, and of what may be called the atmosphere of the whole institution. We desire to say that the officials in that school are humane, kindly, and fair in their conduct. But the Guardians are responsible for the injustice. Not all, indeed, of these ; for some have striven earnestly with Christian hearts to set our children free. As to the others we ask, would these rich and sensitive men, who are detaining our poor Catholic and Irish children, permit a child of their own to remain a day under the powerful influence of one of our Catholic schools or colleges? And shall there be one rule for the rich and another for the poor—one measure for English parents and English children, and another for Irish fathers and mothers, whose last and only possession is their faith, for which they have long ago suffered the loss of all things? We have been hitherto willing to believe that want of thought, and familiarity with old usage, have made them insensible to the injustice they are committing. We are unable any longer to believe this extenuating plea. In the last month this whole matter, with all its details, with the sanction of high official advice, and with renewed and explicit discussion, has been brought before them. Once more they have refused to do

justice. They still persist in deliberately keeping about a hundred poor Catholic children under conditions which, as they know, we described on January 17, in 1874, in the following words, then printed and placed in their hands:—

“ In the last six years the Guardians of most of the Unions and Parishes in the Metropolitan District have used the power given to them by the Statute Laws, and have transferred Catholic Children to Schools of their own Religion. Some, for various reasons, have preferred the other alternative, namely, the affording of Religious Instruction to Catholic Children within the walls of their own Schools.

“ It has been already stated that, down to the present date, such Religious Instruction has consisted in admitting a Catholic Clergyman for an hour or an hour-and-a-half once a week. It cannot be necessary to point out that such a permission can in no way meet the requirements of Religious Education. In some of the Schools the number of Catholic Children varies from 50 to 100. How can a Clergyman, in a visit of an hour-and-a-half once a week, educate in their Religion 100, or even 50 children? If he could explain their Catechism to them, who is to see that they learn it by heart? It is impossible for him to teach it. They ought to know it before he can explain it. The various ages and grades of intelligence in the Children make it impossible to treat them all in one class; and how is one man, in one visit a week, to instruct a number of classes? And what provision does this make for teaching them their prayers, or for preparing them for the Sacraments? If this could be called Religious Instruction, it cannot be called Religious Education, especially when no provision is made for Divine Worship. The evidence of the Report of 1861, already referred to, and abundance of evidence in our hands, proves not only the utter impossibility of giving even Religious Instruction under the inadequate permission hitherto granted, but that the industrious and unceasing efforts made by our Clergy have been followed by consequences disastrous to our Children.

“ The Guardians of St. George's, Hanover Square, have permitted Divine Worship on Sunday, and have expressed their willingness to extend the time to be set apart for Religious Instruction. Although we are not sanguine as to the result of attempting to educate Catholic Children in Schools where the great majority are Protestants, we are nevertheless willing to do our utmost in cooperating with the Guardians.”

When we wrote this they had refused to transfer our children, and offered to us this only alternative. We knew that, if we were to refuse it, the imputation of neglecting our poor children would be thrown on us. We resolved that this should never be said. We appointed and paid a Chaplain. The experiment has been tried for seven years and has failed. To pretend that Catholic children can be educated in their own religion in such a school, cannot be reconciled with reason. In the year 1880 we were allowed to examine the children by an Inspector. They were found ignorant of their religion. The law provides the remedy of transferring them to duly certified schools of their own religion. This act of fair-dealing has been now again, as we have already said, refused, notwithstanding the recommendation of the Committee of Management, and in terms at variance with the Statute Law.

We gladly turn from this painful defeat of natural and christian justice. If it could be alleged that we have been slack in providing schools under efficient teachers and trustworthy management, open at all times to the inspection of Guardians, and of the Sanitary and other Officers of the Government, we should speak with less firmness. But we will gladly invite any inspection and meet any comparison between our schools and those of others.

We have at this time two-and-twenty institutions in which our poor children are housed, maintained, and educated. Of these eight are certified under the Poor-Law Acts, and duly and constantly visited by Guardians and Inspectors. They are also under managers trained for their work; which is given, not for hire, but for duty and by deliberate choice. Of the efficiency and devotion of our religious women we need say nothing; of the conduct and singular ability of the Brothers of Mercy, who for five-and-twenty years have managed our great Orphanage at North Hyde, we may say that no Managers in any District School exceed them in personal conduct, efficient administration, and success in education. We have visited this school, assisted by persons in high official responsibility. Their spontaneous and decided testimony has been as strong and as favourable as our own.

We have at this time about 3,000 children in our two-and-twenty schools. Of these many are wholly and many are in part supported out of the collection made year by year on Quinquagesima Sunday. The proceeds of that collection never suffice for our needs. And this year we have special and urgent work to do.

1. First, we would remind you that at North Hyde we have nearly 700 boys ; and that the Chapel, a miserable building, will not hold three hundred. A Church of sufficient size is an absolute necessity. Such a Church could be built in extreme simplicity for from £1,500 to £2,000. May some one be moved to make this work his own.

2. Next, it is of positive and pressing necessity that a covered room should be provided for the boys, when winter or weather makes it impossible for them to be out in the open air. The cost of such a building would be about £2,000. Towards this £1,300 have been already given or promised.

3. Thirdly, the support of Chaplains for each school weighs heavily upon our scanty means. Before the summer is over some will have spent the stipend of a Chaplain in worldly fashions.

4. There are many children yet to be transferred from the District Schools, and we have, therefore, been compelled to open a new house for boys. The generosity of one who has never failed to help the children of the poor, has enabled us to secure an excellent house, capable of receiving at once 150 boys. We have for the management of it the same Brothers of Mercy who for so many years have had the direction of St. Mary's, North Hyde ; St. Stephen's, at Blythe House ; of St. Edward's, Boleyn Castle ; and of St. Nicholas' School at Little Ilford. But we have to appeal to you for the means to provide the house with beds, and all other necessary furniture and outfit. We trust that your charity to our poor boys will enable us to furnish the dormitories, refectory, and school. A few persons uniting might with little self-denial provide all that is needed. Many can take a share, such as one or more beds, the lavatory, or the furniture of the school.

5. But in asking your alms for these special works, we

must not divert you from the main object of the Quinquagesima Collection. It has been by a long custom devoted to the maintenance of Orphans and destitute children. We have often told you that among these are many whom the changes of life have reduced from abundance to absolute poverty. You would not that we should refuse to help them when the alternative is the loss of Catholic faith. But how can we receive them unless you help us to support them? Every year we run beyond the prudence of this world; but every year the providence of our Good Master comes at last to our aid. The education of children is a work that can never fail. When we have done our part, they may wreck it of their own will. But our work remains where nothing is forgotten. You that can give, give gladly; or if you can, give largely, even with denial of yourselves. Whatever you deny to yourselves or forego that you may save a soul, is laid up for a great recompense: here in this world by peace and gladness of heart; and in the day of account by the blissful words, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

The peace of God be with you and abide with you to the end.

Given at Westminster, and appointed to be read in the Churches of the Diocese on Quinquagesima Sunday, 1882, when the Annual Collection will be made.

HENRY EDWARD,

CARDINAL ARCHBISHOP OF WESTMINSTER.

W. A. JOHNSON, *Secretary.*

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\* \* \* The proceeds of the Collection are to be sent without delay to the Secretary of the Westminster Diocesan Education Fund, Rev. THOMAS SEDDON, Archbishop's House, Westminster, S.W.

